



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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OPERATION PREDATOR ARRESTS SURPASS 5,000 *Alaska accounts for 15 arrests in initiative targeting child sex predators*

ANCHORAGE – Fifteen of the 5,000 child sex offenders arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as part of an ongoing international initiative known as Operation Predator have occurred in Alaska.

Michael J. Garcia, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for ICE, announced today that arrests in the 20-month long effort have surpassed 5,000. Among those individuals arrested here are:

- Robert W. Boatwright of Douglas, a registered sex offender, pleaded guilty to three counts of possession of child pornography charges in November 2004. Boatwright was arrested based on leads generated as part of Operation Falcon, an international ICE investigation into a company in Belarus that provided credit card billing services for some 50 child pornography websites. He is currently serving a ten-year sentence.
- Lawrence Bowman JR, Fairbanks, is serving 33 months in federal custody for possession of child pornography based on a joint FBI/ICE case.
- William Scott Potts of Ketchikan is currently serving a ten-year federal sentence for transportation and possession of child pornography.

Operation Predator is a comprehensive initiative aimed at those who prey on and exploit children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable.

“Sexual predators will not go unpunished for their heinous crimes,” said Garcia. “Whether the criminal is a U.S. citizen who thinks they can travel overseas to molest children or a pornographer who trades in images of child sexual abuse, or a foreign national who has lost the privilege to remain in the U.S. because of a crime against a child, ICE will identify, arrest, and, where possible, remove them.”

Operation Predator evolved out of ICE’s mission to find and deport illegal aliens -- particularly those with criminal records, and reflects the agency’s traditional public safety mission. Those arrested fall into four general categories:

Foreign National Child Predators: More than 85 percent of the arrests in Operation Predator involve foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 2,100 of these predators have been deported.

International Child Sex Tourists: Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE's attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents have made 14 arrests, including the first 12 arrests, under the child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act.

Human Smuggling & Trafficking of Children: The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger.

Internet Child Pornography: Drawing on ICE's cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation's virtual borders. One massive investigation has resulted in more than 1,200 arrests worldwide and marks the first time the government has gone after the financial side of child pornography. Moreover, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 1,600 pornographic images containing child pornography have been authenticated.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at www.ice.gov. ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

Editor's Note: B-roll, including video of arrests, an interview with Assistant Secretary Garcia, and graphics will be available via satellite at 12:00 noon PST. The coordinates for the video feed are: GALAXY 3/C-Band Transponder 6, Vertical: 95° West, Downlink frequency: 3820 Mhz.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.